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ABSTRACT

This literature review was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department (SEELLD) from the Scottish Council for Research in Education Centre of Glasgow University. An implementation team was formed to explore the use of mentors to support client groups in their transition to post-school education, training, and employment. The team's specification also listed the key questions which the review should seek to answer. These were: What is a mentor/mentoring? What works? What is the evidence of positive outcomes for young people? What doesn't work? Is there a case for regulating mentors? What are the views/experiences of mentees? What are the views/experience of mentors? What are the views/experiences of commissioning bodies and/or employers? These key questions have been used to structure the review. It is noted that this cannot be a comprehensive review of the literature on mentoring as that literature covers a vast range of work in a wide variety of settings. Instead, this review concentrates on the core area of mentoring with young people, particularly those 'who require additional support', for whatever reason. The author notes that the whole area of mentoring is fraught with definitional and conceptual problems, much of it is under-researched and, where research does exist, some of it must be treated with caution. Two appendixes contain other relevant work and the search strategies used to identify the literature. (Contains 74 references.) (GCP)

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A literature review

John C. Hall

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Mentoring and Young People

A literature review

John C. Hall

March 2003

the SCRE Centre
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Executive summary

What is a mentor/mentoring?

- Mentoring is an ill-defined concept which is deeply contested by some critics who see some manifestations of it as built upon a questionable 'deficit' model.
- Mentoring exists in many forms which are at least partly defined by the origin, purpose, nature, and site of the mentoring relationship.

What is the evidence of positive outcomes for young people?

- Most large quantitative studies of the impact of mentoring come from the USA.
- The US studies indicate that mentoring can have a significant impact on a number of measures, but that this impact may not be large.
- The best US evidence is that mentoring may have some impact on problem or high-risk behaviours, academic/educational outcomes, and career/ employment outcomes.
- There is a very poor evidence base in the UK. Claims are made for the impact of mentoring but there is as yet little evidence to substantiate them.

What works?

- The US literature has identified a number of key features which help to make mentoring schemes successful. These include: monitoring of program implementation; screening of prospective mentors; matching of mentors and youth on relevant criteria; both pre-match and on-going training; supervision; support for mentors; structured activities for mentors and youth; parental support and involvement; frequency of contact and length of relationship.
- The UK literature reminds us that mentoring needs to be properly integrated into its organisational context and establish appropriate links with other services and opportunities.
- There are mixed views on whether mentors should be matched with their mentees and, if so, on what basis the matching should be made.

What doesn't work?

Mentoring is in danger of being unsuccessful if any of the following conditions apply:

- Social distance and mismatch between the values of mentor and mentee.
- Inexpert or untrained mentors.
- Mismatch between the aims of the mentoring scheme and the needs of the person being mentored.
- Conflict of roles such that it is not clear whether the mentor is to act on behalf of the person being mentored or of 'authority'.

Is there a case for regulation?

- Research has little to say on the case for regulation, although it does recognise the potential for problems to arise in the mentoring relationship.

What are the views of mentees?

- There is little in the literature which explores the views of mentees in any depth.
- Some research demonstrates how much mentees value their relationship with their mentor.
- It is clear that mentees will react to mentoring schemes according to whether they are congruent with their own values.

What are the views of mentors?

- Mentors tend to be female, white, and (probably) middle class.
- Benefits to mentors can be classified in terms of self-esteem, social insight, and social and interpersonal skills.
- When mentoring schemes go wrong both mentors and mentees can suffer.

What are the views of commissioning bodies and/or employers?

- Those directly involved in promoting mentoring tend to make large claims for it. Insofar as these are supported by research, they are discussed earlier.
- There are signs that research funders are beginning to recognise the need for research into mentoring in the UK.
- There is some evidence that businesses are favourably disposed towards mentoring (both for their own employees and for others), but this varies with the culture of the organisation.

1. Introduction

This literature review was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department (SEELLD) from the SCRE Centre of Glasgow University. Following the publication of the Beattie Report *Implementing Inclusiveness: Realising Potential* an implementation team was set up to forward its aims. One of the areas which this team wished to explore was the use of mentors to support the Beattie client group in their transition to post-school education, training, and employment. The specification for this literature review defined the Beattie client group in this way:

> The Beattie client group includes young people aged 16–24 years who require additional support in order to access and participate in post-school education, training and employment. The young people are considered to be most at risk of social exclusion due to a range of factors such as physical disabilities, mental health problems, learning difficulties/disabilities, social and emotional behaviour issues, low attainment, drug and alcohol misuse and homelessness.

This is a broad definition which encompasses a range of factors, some of which might be thought to go beyond the traditional definitions of 'special educational needs'.

The specification also listed the key questions which the review should seek to answer. These were:

- What is a mentor/mentoring?
- What works?
- What is the evidence of positive outcomes for young people?
- What doesn't work
- Is there a case for regulating mentors?
- What are the views/experiences of mentees?
- What are the views/experience of mentors?
- What are the views/experiences of commissioning bodies and/or employers?

These key questions have been used to structure the review (with a slight change in the order in which they are addressed as it seemed best to reverse the order of the second and third questions).

The specification also asked that the review should cover published literature from the UK 'and other relevant countries' from 1995 onwards. In practice this has meant that the review concentrates on literature from the UK and the USA which has been published in the last seven years. The American literature is very extensive but, fortunately, much of it has been previously reviewed and summarised, and these reviews are drawn upon as appropriate. The strength of the US literature is in the large-scale quantitative analyses which have been done there. The UK does not have an equivalent evidence-base, but is possibly stronger on qualitative insights from the participants in mentoring, and on analyses and

criticisms of the concepts underlying it. 'Grey' literature, mostly in the form of conference papers and internet sources, has also been included in this review where relevant.

This cannot be a comprehensive review of the literature on mentoring as that literature covers a vast range of work in a wide variety of settings. To take two obvious examples: literature which relates to the use of mentoring in business or in professional development has not been included. Instead the review concentrates on the core area of mentoring with young people, particularly those 'who require additional support', for whatever reason, although it does occasionally draw on work in related areas where it appears to offer pertinent insights. The search strategies used to identify the literature are described in Appendix B.

As we shall see, the whole area of mentoring is fraught with definitional and conceptual problems, much of it is under-researched and, where research does exist, some of it must be treated with caution.

The specification for the review specifically asked that the implications of some recent work by Professor Carol Fitzgibbon of Durham University should be addressed. As this does not directly concern mentoring, but does look at the impact of identifying 'underaspiring' pupils, it is discussed separately in Appendix A.

2. What is a mentor/mentoring?

Definitions and analyses

The problem with any study of mentoring begins at the very beginning for, as Clutterbuck noted at the Third European Mentoring conference in 1996 'the biggest problem for researchers into mentoring is still defining what it is' (Clutterbuck, 1996). Simple rule-of-thumb definitions abound in the literature, often drawn directly from dictionaries. A typical example would be the characterisation of mentoring as 'conceptually it is the classic strategy: the more experienced shall care for and train the less experienced, in a non-judgmental manner' (Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998). The emphasis on 'care' and a 'non-judgmental manner' are the features which are taken to distinguish mentoring from other forms of instruction. However, this does not take us very far: as soon as we attempt to describe what this means in practice, we find that we are back in what has been described as the 'definitional quagmire' (Roberts, 2000) surrounding mentoring. For example, Philip (1999) has the following to say about the litany of terms associated with mentoring:

> Mentoring can hold a range of meanings and the terminology reveals a diverse set of underlying assumptions. For example, youth mentoring has been associated with programmes aiming at coaching, counselling, teaching, tutoring, volunteering, role modelling, proctoring, and advising. Similarly the role of the mentor has been described as role model, champion, leader, guide, adviser, counsellor, volunteer, coach, sponsor, protector, and preceptor. A similar range of terms may apply to the mentee, protégé, client, apprentice, aspirant, pupil etc.
>
> The process itself may also be described variously as 'reciprocal', 'helping', 'advising', 'leading', or 'facilitating' as 'a collaborative enterprise' with shared ideals or as a 'learning process' by which the mentor leads by example. In general however knowledge and understanding about the processes which take place within mentoring relationships remains at a preliminary stage. Clearly some of the meanings are contradictory especially in the absence of explanatory frameworks.
>
> (Philip, 1999)

This certainly demonstrates the potential for confusion, but does little to indicate what, if anything, is unique to mentoring that can distinguish it from other forms of educational process. The terminology surrounding mentors, mentoring and mentees is bewilderingly various, vague and sometimes misleading (the term 'mentee' is itself an erroneous formation, but is used here as it seems to have established itself in the literature, and is used in the review specification).

Roberts (2000), in a re-reading of mentoring literature published between 1978 and 1999, attempts to cut through this 'quagmire' by distinguishing between what he sees as the essential and the contingent attributes of mentoring:

> Mentoring appears to have the *essential* attributes of: a process; a supportive relationship; a helping process; a teaching-learning process; a reflective process; a career development process; a formalised process; and a role constructed by and for a mentor. The *contingent* attributes of the mentoring phenomenon appear as: coaching, sponsoring, role modelling, assessing and an informal process.
>
> (Roberts, 2000)

However, it is not at all clear that all of these attributes really are essential to all types of 'mentoring' (which will be discussed below), nor that any such list of attributes enhances our understanding of what remains a very fuzzy and ill-defined concept. Indeed, Roberts and Chernopiskaya had earlier argued that mentoring terminologies were 'too broad and ill-defined' and that 'to protect against common scepticism, the deployment of mentoring terminology needs a rational and necessary base' (Roberts and Chernopiskaya, 1999).

They attempt to begin this process of clarification by examining the origins and associations of the term 'mentor'. Noting that it is commonly traced back to the figure of Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*, the 'protective, guiding and supportive figure who acted as a wise and trusted counsellor to Telemachus', they argue that this is a misreading and that the modern associations of 'mentor' owe more to Fenellon's *Les Adventures de Telemaque*, which was widely influential in the eighteenth century (Roberts and Chernopiskaya, 1999). Homer's Mentor was in fact highly unsuccessful as a counsellor and protector.

Further analysis of the origin and nature of the term 'mentoring' is provided by Helen Colley (Colley, 2000a, 2001c) who points out that any 'mentoring' done in the *Odyssey* is done by the goddess Athene and that, far from being warm and nurturing 'the *Odyssey* is in fact a very brutal story of a powerful prince mentored by an omnipotent deity'(Colley 2000a). 'The myth of kindly nurture is itself a modern creation, contrasting starkly with the brutal outcomes of Homer's *Odyssey'* and that this is 'done in the interests of preserving a particular social order'(Colley 2001c). For Colley this is of more than historical interest as it clarifies some of the ideological assumptions behind modern uses of the term 'mentoring' and reveals the way that it is used to manipulate and control both the young people being mentored and their mentors (Colley, 2001c).

Criticisms of mentoring

Criticisms of the ideology behind mentoring have also been raised by Gulam and Zulfiqar who noted the close connection between mentoring and the world of business and asked 'what do the varied projects and practitioners of mentoring actually mentor individuals into?' and 'who is going to benefit from this enterprise?' The authors note that mentoring is an essentially conservative enterprise which tends to reproduce the *status quo* – 'what we will get is the same as ever before – no more than the reproduction of a given paradigm.' This being so 'those who presently benefit from the *status quo* will sleep well at nig[illegible]' To counter this they advocate drawing mentors from a wider range of backgrounds, including 'community based initiatives' (Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998).

Other criticisms of mentoring have focused on other underlying assumptions, particularly the way that modern versions appear to disregard the social context within which the mentoring takes place. For Philip (1999) 'contextual factors have long been neglected' and 'implicit to many interventions is a deficit model of young people and mentoring'. Colley and Hodkinson analyse the Social Exclusion Unit's report *Bridging the Gap*, which has had a major influence on the government's policy towards socially excluded young people. They find that

it contains 'a moralistic interpretation of the problem, which locates the causes of social exclusion in the deficits of individuals, and aggregates those individuals as generalised, and pathologised, social groupings'. The report omits certain types of 'at risk' characteristics such as gay or lesbian lifestyle, disability, racial or ethnic discrimination, and gender. Also 'It fails to acknowledge the functioning of deep-rooted, structural factors in society, such as class, race and gender, that profoundly affect young people's life chances' and ignores 'the considerable evidence of large-scale structural unemployment and underemployment created in response to new technologies and globalisation' including 'the collapse of the youth labour market'. '... at the same time as focusing on individual deficit, it does so in a way that denies diversity and individuality, and reduces those it describes to categories and stereotypes'.

Piper and Piper (2000) examine the problematic nature of terms such as 'disaffected', 'disengaged' and 'empowerment' in policy discussions. There is no agreement on their meaning. They discuss 'the prevalence in Britain of individualistic approaches to policy in this area' and note that

> While many would argue that the young people in such projects are victims, or unfortunate, the approach is essentially pathological. The problem is located with the young person and only limited reference is made to their family situation, the local labour market, surrounding professional systems or the framework of relevant policy.
>
> (Piper and Piper, 2000)

Piper and Piper also claim that 'Empowerment as an idea, and mentoring as a practice, may be identified as a means by which those with power pre-empt the capacity of others to interpret their own needs and problems' and that 'the naive application of mentoring entails collusion with the dominant ideologies and contradictions of a divided and unequal society, and that no change will be achieved.' They go on to say that 'This discussion suggests that mentoring with young people should be focused on specific goals positively regarded by young people and not on alleged generalised conditions like disaffection or disengagement' (Piper and Piper, 2000).

It is clear from all of these discussions that mentoring is not a straightforward concept: in many ways it is ill-defined and it occupies contested territory somewhere between those who would see it as all warm and comforting and those who regard it as an ill-disguised attempt to maintain existing power relations by shifting attention away from social inequalities to the alleged inadequacies of individuals. With the Beattie client group in mind, it would be interesting to compare this deficit model of mentoring with models of disability which have been rejected by disability campaigners for many years. 'Medical' (or deficit) models of disability, which see disability as essentially a lack in the person who has the disability, have tended to be replaced by 'social' models which rather emphasise the disabling features of the environment in which people find themselves (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990). It would be ironic if campaigners were to find that they had defeated one deficit model (of disability) only to find another (of mentoring) foisted upon them.

Classifications of mentoring

Some of these arguments may make us regard 'mentoring' with some suspicion, but we are still little nearer to deciding what it is. In fact, something called 'mentoring' takes many forms, exists in a variety of settings, and can be employed for a range of purposes. Some attempts have been made to untangle this complex of interacting factors.

In 1996 Philip and Hendry produced an initial typology of mentoring drawn from interviews with 150 young people aged between 13 and 18 years old. They identified five different styles of mentoring, which they described as follows:

1. 'classic' mentoring – 'a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a young person where the older, experienced mentor provides support, advice and challenge'

2. individual–team mentoring – 'where a group looks to an individual or small number of individuals for support, advice and challenge'

3. friend-to-friend mentoring

4. peer-group mentoring – 'where an ordinary friendship group takes on a mentoring role'

5. long-term relationship mentoring with 'risk-taking' adults – 'This style is similar to "classic" mentoring in many respects, but it differs in that it is often a relationship between a young person and a mentor who has had a history of rebellion and challenging authority and who is perceived by the young person as resisting adult definitions of the social world'.

(Philip and Hendry, 1996)

They note that the process of mentoring appears to be highly gendered with young men less likely to engage with it. However this varied with the different types of mentoring. They also identified the different contexts in which different types of mentoring were likely to occur, the 'life events' associated with each, and the qualities sought for, or found in, mentors in each type. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: A typology of perceived mentoring forms

Mentoring forms	Classic (1)	Individual/ team (2)	Best friend (3)	Peer group (4)	Long-term 'risk' (5)
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Both	Both
Context	Home based	Youth groups	Home based	Street action	Home and street
Life events	Empathy, recognition and aspiring to 'role models'	Acceptance of peer group and youth culture values	Rehearsal for social action	Managing reputations identity/ lifestyle	Recognition and life crises. Empathy
Qualities sought/ identified	Advisor, guide (not parent), 'outsider'	Mentor(s) empathetic	Reciprocity and equality	Reciprocity and equality	Reciprocity and non-conformity

Source: Philip and Hendry, 1996

Philip also makes the distinction between 'naturally occurring' mentoring which arises from the existing relationships in a young person's life, and 'artificial' mentoring which is deliberately brought about by an outside agency (Philip, 1999). Much of Philip's work has been concerned with informal 'naturally occurring' mentoring (Philip, 2000a, 2000b; Philip and Hendry, 2000). Others who have looked in detail at this kind of mentoring have included Bennetts, who looked at the experiences of 24 lifelong learners and found that most of their meaningful mentoring relationships had occurred naturally in informal settings. Bennetts concluded that:

> What is essential to a traditional mentor relationship appears to be its informality, and as what occurs naturally cannot be expected to flourish under artificial constraints there is little we can do to reproduce the relationship.
>
> (Bennetts, 2001)

This is perhaps an unduly pessimistic conclusion.

In the United States, Sipe and Roder have produced a classification of mentoring schemes for school-age children. They classify these schemes according to their position on three dimensions: whether they are based on group or one-to-one mentoring; whether they are 'site-based' (mostly in schools) or community-based; and whether they aim to promote personal development or academic behaviour or performance. (Sipe and Roder, 1999).

In the UK, Ford summarised the findings from the *Mentoring Action Project* (MAP) which was concerned with career guidance mentoring. Four different styles of mentoring were identified in this project. These were briefly characterised as the 'good parent', the 'learning facilitator', the 'career guidance provider', and the 'social worker'. In practice all four styles tended to inter-relate and overlap (Ford, 1998). Roberts made a more general distinction between *expressive* and *instrumental* behaviour, where expressiveness was defined as a sensitivity to others' responses and instrumentality as a goal orientation. He found that mentors themselves felt that they were expected to display both sorts of behaviour in a

flexible and versatile way, as appropriate, but that they also thought that they were expected to show higher levels of expressive than instrumental behaviour (Roberts, 1999).

Piper and Piper made a similar distinction and pointed out how much the nature of mentoring depends on the purposes and expected outcomes of the mentoring:

> Helping someone to become a teacher or gas technician or doctor (where both mentor and mentee are likely to be employed on the same basis and subject to the same disciplines) appears to be quite distinct type of activity from helping someone to become socially integrated or escape from disaffection. In such a situation, an apprenticeship model is not obviously appropriate.
>
> ... While the characteristics required of a satisfactory mentor in teacher training or preparation for Christian ministry are relatively clear and job-specific, those required for work with disaffected young people are less obviously apparent. The knowledge base for the mentoring role in such a context is hard to define, and there is a possible inference that being a 'responsible adult' is enough.
>
> (Piper and Piper, 1999)

Piper and Piper go on to put forward an 'ideal type' model based on the two dimensions 'society' and 'young person' where 'society' is either characterised by a state of *a)* conflict, fragmentation, and competing interests, or *b)* consensus, integration and common interest; and the young person being mentored is either *a)* passive and moulded by society or *b)* active and able to create meanings and values.

There clearly is a distinction to be made between helping someone to acquire the skills and behaviours appropriate to a profession or occupation when they have voluntarily chosen to become a member of that profession or occupational group, and when the skills and behaviours are widely understood and recognised, and the contrasting position of trying to persuade a possibly reluctant 'disaffected' young person to acquire and display a set of contested social values which are in any case hard to define.

All of these distinctions, typologies and classifications point to the fact that mentoring exists in a variety of forms, each of which is located somewhere in a multi-dimensional space. Abstracting from all the above texts, we can say that there are at least four of these dimensions, which may be characterised in the following way:

1. the origin of the mentoring relationship – to what extent is it a 'naturally occurring' relationship or one that has been artificially promoted?
2. the purpose of the mentoring – to what extent is it instrumental (akin to inducting the apprentice into a craft or profession) or expressive (guiding the naive and undeveloped youth into responsible adulthood)? (We can also add that the extent to which mentor and mentee share the purposes and goals of the mentoring relationship is an important factor here.)
3. the nature of the mentoring relationship – is it a one-to-one relationship or one-to-a-group?

4. the site of the mentoring – to what extent is it 'site-based' (for example, tied to a school or college) or 'community-based' (situated in the young person's family, community or wider social sphere).

Where a mentoring relationship is situated on each of these four dimensions will go some way to determining its characteristics. Given this diversity it is easy to see that there are many possible ways in which a mentoring relationship can manifest itself. In one guise mentoring could be almost indistinguishable from a deep friendship, in another it would be hard to say how it differed from any teacher-student relationship. Mentoring is not one thing: it is a range of possibilities. Perhaps this goes some way to explaining why there is so little agreement about its definition and why so much of the language used about it seems to lead to confusion rather than clarification.

Conclusions

- Mentoring is an ill-defined concept which is deeply contested by some critics who see some manifestations of it as built upon a questionable 'deficit' model.
- Mentoring exists in many forms which are at least partly defined by the origin, purpose, nature, and site of the mentoring relationship.

3. What is the evidence of positive outcomes for young people?

Within the mass of literature which exists on mentoring there are many claims made for its efficacy. However, not all of these claims are well-founded. Some originate from within the mentoring programmes themselves and may be best regarded as advocacy rather than evidence. Some are based on qualitative studies of participants' perceptions and may provide interesting insights but offer no evidence of measurable impact.

A vast amount of work has been done in the United States of America. It is there that we will find the longest-running mentoring schemes (notably the Big Brothers / Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) scheme which has existed for over 90 years), and the largest scale attempts to quantify the impact of these schemes. The US schemes tend to focus on particular ethnic groups or on young people who are identified as 'at-risk' because of a number of social factors. Given their different history and social context it is not easy to see how evidence on their impact could directly translate into a UK context.

We will outline some of the more important evidence from the USA (and elsewhere) before returning to look at findings from within the UK.

Evidence from the USA and elsewhere

One of the most recent, and most impressive, analyses of the impact of mentoring schemes has recently been published by DuBois *et al* (2002). They conducted a meta-analysis of 55 evaluations of the effects of mentoring schemes. This is a highly technical, statistically-based analysis with a strong quantitative base which has been conducted entirely independently of any of the mentoring schemes reviewed. As such it must be given a great deal of weight. Their overall conclusion was that mentoring programmes do indeed have a significant and measurable effect on the young people who take part in them, but that the size of this effect is quite modest for the average youth. Therefore, while mentoring can make a difference, we should not expect it to be a large difference. They looked at five types of outcome measure. These were

1. problem or high-risk behaviours
2. academic/educational outcomes
3. career/employment outcomes
4. social competence
5. emotional and psychological adjustment.

They concluded that mentoring programmes certainly had a significant, if small, effect on the first three of these types of outcome, and may have had some effect on the last two. (Because of the highly statistical nature of their meta-analysis certain technical assumptions had to be made for the analysis. One of these was between a 'fixed effects' model and a 'random effects' model. The 'fixed effects' model assumes that there is no error produced by the nature of the original

evaluation, while the 'random effects' model allows that error could be introduced by differences in the evaluation methodologies and is a more stringent test. In this cased there were arguments in favour of both sets of assumptions, so both types of analysis were conducted. The 'fixed effects' model found a significant impact on all five types of outcome, while the 'random effects' model found significant impacts on only the first three.)

It is worth quoting some of their conclusions in detail:

- 'Findings of this investigation provide support for the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs.'
- 'Favorable effects of mentoring programs are similarly apparent across youth varying in demographic and background characteristics such as age, gender race/ethnicity, and family structure and across different types of outcomes that have been assessed using multiple sources of data.'
- The benefits are 'quite modest in terms of absolute magnitude' with 'only a small effect 'for mentoring programs'. An average effect size of 0.14, or approximately one-eighth of a standard deviation, is quoted. (They note that 'This aspect of findings is seemingly inconsistent with the widespread and largely unquestioned support that mentoring initiatives have enjoyed in recent years.')
- 'The theory-based and empirically based indices of best practices for mentoring programs are particularly noteworthy among the significant moderators of effect size identified.' [see section on 'What Works?' for further discussion of these indices]
- 'These latter program features [i.e. those which increase the likelihood of a significant impact] include ongoing training for mentors, structured activities for mentors and youth as well as expectations for frequency of contact, mechanisms for support and involvement of parents, and monitoring of overall program implementation.'
- 'It appears based on this research that multiple features of relationships, such as frequency of contact, emotional closeness, and longevity, each may make important and distinctive contributions to positive youth outcomes.'
- 'A further noteworthy result is the support found for the prevailing view that mentoring programs offer the greatest potential benefits to youth who can be considered to be at-risk.' This is particularly so for 'youth experiencing conditions of environmental risk or disadvantage' and 'a similar trend is apparent when considering low family socioeconomic status as a specific indicator of environmental disadvantage' 'By contrast, evidence of an overall favorable effect of mentoring is notably lacking under circumstances in which participating youth have been identified as being at risk solely on the basis of individual-level characteristics (e.g. academic failure).'
- 'From an applied perspective, findings offer support for continued implementation and dissemination of mentoring programs for youth.'

(Adapted from DuBois *et al*, 2002)

Some of these points are discussed further in the next section ('What Works?) but are given here for completeness.

This is undoubtedly the single most important attempt to quantify the impact of mentoring schemes reported in this review. Its conclusions are cautiously optimistic, but not euphoric.

One other important independent review of studies of mentoring schemes is that by Jekielek *et al.* (2002). They reviewed studies of ten youth mentoring programmes, basing their conclusions only on those studies which were based on experimental designs (i.e. quantitative studies using experimental and control groups). This study is less extensive than that by Dubois *et al* and is reported in less detail. They do not, for example, give any details about the size of any impact that these programmes may have had. Nevertheless they do conclude that:

> Mentored youth are likely to have fewer absences from school, better attitudes towards school, fewer incidents of hitting others, less drug and alcohol use, more positive attitudes towards their elders and toward helping in general, and improved relationships with their parents.
>
> (Jekielek *et al*, 2002)

They also found that:

> 'Mentoring relationships do not consistently improve young people's perceptions of their worth.'
>
> 'The longer the mentoring relationship, the better the outcome.'
>
> 'Youth are more likely to benefit if mentors maintain frequent contact with them and know their families.'
>
> 'Young people who perceive high-quality relationships with their mentors experience the best results.'
>
> 'Overall, young people who are the most disadvantaged or at-risk seem to benefit the most from mentoring.'
>
> 'Mentoring programs need structure and planning to facilitate high levels of interaction between young people and their mentors.'
>
> 'Mentoring programs that are driven more by the needs and interests of youth – rather than the expectations of the adult volunteers – are more likely to succeed.'
>
> (Jekielek *et al*, 2002)

They could reach no conclusion about whether mentoring improved academic performance (as measured by grades awarded). They also suggested that mentoring relationships of short duration could do more harm than good.

Most of the mentoring schemes examined were community-based (rather than school-based), most were particularly targeted at 'at-risk' groups, and most had been augmented by other forms of intervention, such as academic support of one kind or another. All of these factors serve to limit the extent to which one can readily generalise from these findings.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)is the oldest and best known mentoring programme in the USA and one of the most widely publicised studies of its impact is that by Tierney *et al* (1995). This is one of a number of studies of BBBSA conducted under the auspices of *Public/Private Ventures*, an independent organisation which has become closely associated with BBBSA and which is heavily involved in promoting mentoring and other social interventions. Tierney *et al* conducted a comparative study of 959 10- to 16-year olds who had applied to eight different BBBSA programmes in 1992 and 1993. Half were admitted and half were placed on a waiting list and used as a control group. After 18 months it was found that BBBSA participants

- were less likely to use drugs and alcohol;
- were less likely to hit someone;
- had improved attendance, school performance, and attitudes toward completing school work;
- demonstrated improved peer and family relationships.

(Tierney *et al*, 1995)

There was no impact on 'self-concept' or on the number of social and cultural activities in which the BBBSA participants took part.

There are a small number of other US studies which are either concerned with large programmes or have particular points to note. Novotney *et al* (2000) reported on the *Juvenile Mentoring Program* (JUMP) using data from over 7000 young people and 6000 mentors. This is a very large dataset, but they found that they had no conclusive data on the impact of the scheme although mentoring 'shows great promise'. Beier *et al* (2000) surveyed 294 adolescents who were receiving outpatient medical care. Each completed a self-administered anonymous questionnaire. They found that those with an adult mentor were significantly less likely to carry a weapon, use illicit drugs, smoke, or have had sex with more than one partner in the last six months. There was no significant impact on the consumption of alcohol. The mentor relationships identified in this survey were most likely to be of the naturally-occurring 'informal' type and not part of organised programmes, although the definition of 'mentor' used is not entirely clear from the paper. Lee and Cramond (1995) found improvements in the aspirations of economically disadvantaged students as a result of mentoring. Brawer (1996) commented on the success of mentoring in reducing student attrition in US Community Colleges, while Borden *et al* (1997) found that a student mentoring scheme in a university had the effect of raising student attainment by one-half a grade and increasing student retention by 15%.

From elsewhere we should briefly note Carmeli's (2000) report on the nationwide tutoring and mentoring scheme which operates in Israel. This pairs university students with school pupils and is perhaps more like tutoring than mentoring (though this again raises definitional problems). Carmeli claims that those who are mentored are less likely to use drugs or alcohol, less likely to hit someone, show improved school attendance and performance and better attitudes to school,

and have improved peer and family relationships. The report is quite short and no evidence for these claims is given.

Evidence from the UK

There is no comparable body of evidence on the impact of mentoring in the UK literature, certainly none with the quantitative base of the larger US studies, but there are a few studies which shed some light on its possible impact.

For example, a study of current mentoring schemes for unemployed youth in England, Scotland and Wales looked at the views of the co-ordinators of 22 schemes and found that the

> Co-ordinators were unanimous concerning the positive benefits of mentoring for the young mentees. Such benefits ranged from the psychosocial e.g. raised self-esteem; improved confidence, better communication skills; having a non-authoritarian figure to talk to; improved motivation: to those which were more job focused e.g. learning how to search for jobs, cv planning; job applications; NVQ achievement; money management.
>
> (Bennetts, 1999)

However, this study was limited to the perceptions of the scheme co-ordinators and reported nothing of the views of the young people concerned, nor any quantitative data on the outcomes of the schemes.

Ford (1998) looked at *Career Guidance Mentoring for Disengaged Young People*, most of whom were 'homeless or periodically homeless, leaving care, ex-offenders, on drugs, lone parents, or going through personal crises (normally family-related)' and found that 55% of the young people involved in the projects went on to enter education, training or employment. There was no control group for comparative purposes, so we can say little how this figure differs from what would be expected if there had been no mentoring, but the implication is that these were a particularly vulnerable group for whom poor outcomes could have been expected if there had been no intervention.

Much of the other UK literature which mentions impact is related to mentoring schemes in schools and gives little detail and no measurement of that impact. Green and Rogers (1997) reported on a *Business in the Community* initiative which paired British Telecom employees with school pupils and claimed that it had some impact on pupils, particularly in their attitudes to GCSE work. Hyland and Postlethwaite(1998) looked at a mentoring programme for Year 7 and 12 in a Girls School and found some evidence of enhanced attitudes towards school work and increased motivation, but this programme appeared to resemble 'academic tutoring' more than mentoring (we must add here the usual proviso about the lack of clarity in the definitions of these terms).

Miller (1998) collected data on 90 mentored students, 59 mentors, and 93 control students in seven schools in England which were involved in business and community mentoring. Most mentors were from the local business community, and most schools tended to avoid selecting 'disaffected' students for mentoring. Miller notes that:

> Mentoring co-ordinators tended to view the impact of mentoring on attainment as indirect (operating through increased motivation) but the research concluded that mentoring had a positive impact on attainment for both boys and girls.
>
> (Miller, 1998)

St James-Roberts and Samlal Singh (2001) examined the impact of a mentoring programme with primary school pupils who 'exhibit behaviour problems and other at risk factors'. There was a comparison group of similar children, and standardised measures of behaviour, school attendance and exclusion, and academic performance were used. Comparisons between the two groups were made after one year of the scheme's operation. They found that 'The main gains reported are in the development of confidence, self-control and social awareness and relationships'. Unfortunately (for the research) they found that similar gains occurred in the comparison group and both groups continued to show serious problems. They conclude that 'This finding may indicate that mentoring cannot achieve significant generalised behavioural change in such children within a year, implying a need for additional supports'.

Conclusions

- Most large quantitative studies of the impact of mentoring come from the USA.
- The US studies indicate that mentoring can have a significant impact on a number of measures, but that this impact may not be large.
- The best US evidence is that mentoring may have some impact on problem or high-risk behaviours, academic/educational outcomes, and career/ employment outcomes.
- There is a very poor evidence base in the UK. Claims are made for the impact of mentoring but there is as yet little evidence to substantiate them.

4. What works?

While there are limitations to the research evidence on the impact of mentoring, it is clear (particularly from the US evidence) that some forms of intervention have more impact than others. In this section we will look at what the literature has to say about the factors which are likely to improve the effectiveness of mentoring, while in the next section we will look at those factors which may inhibit it. Once again, we begin with the evidence from the USA before returning to the UK literature.

Evidence from the USA

Dubois *et al* (2002) in their meta-analysis of evaluations of mentoring programmes found that there were a number of factors associated with increased impact of mentoring. They looked at two sets of such factors. One they described as their 'theory-based index of best practice' which was derived from the existing literature. The other was their 'empirically-based index of best practice' which was derived from features in their dataset. Both of these sets of factors turned out to be associated with increased impact of the mentoring programmes. The more of each set which was included in each mentoring programme, the better the chances of that programme having an impact.

The 'theory-based index of best practice' was based on the presence of the following features:

- monitoring of program implementation
- screening of prospective mentors
- matching of mentors and youth on relevant criteria
- both pre-match and on-going training
- supervision
- support group for mentors
- structured activities for mentors and youth
- parent support and involvement
- expectations for both frequency of contact and length of relationship.

The 'empirically-based index of best practice' included

- setting of mentoring activities (all settings other than school)
- monitoring of implementation
- mentor background in helping role/profession
- ongoing training of mentors
- structured activities for mentors/youth
- parent support/involvement
- expectations of frequency of contact.

The presence of each of these features led to enhancement of the impact of the mentoring programmes. There is a great deal of overlap between the two sets – they could easily be merged despite their derivation from different sources. Dubois *et al* also noted that 'multiple features of relationships, such as frequency of contact, emotional closeness, and longevity, each may make important and distinctive contributions to positive youth outcomes' and that 'mentoring programs offer the greatest potential benefits to youth who can be considered to be at-risk' (Dubois *et al*, 2002).

Jekielek *et al* (2002), in their review of mentoring programmes, did not provide such a detailed list of factors likely to enhance the impact of mentoring, but those that they did identify are not inconsistent with Dubois *et al*'s list. The factors they identify are:

- 'The longer the mentoring relationship, the better the outcome.'
- 'Youth are more likely to benefit if mentors maintain frequent contact with them and know their families.'
- 'Young people who perceive high-quality relationships with their mentors experience the best results.'
- 'Overall, young people who are the most disadvantaged or at-risk seem to benefit the most from mentoring.'
- 'Mentoring programs need structure and planning to facilitate high levels of interaction between young people and their mentors.'
- 'Mentoring programs that are driven more by the needs and interests of youth – rather than the expectations of the adult volunteers – are more likely to succeed.'

(Derived from Jekielek *et al*, 2002)

Only the last of these points seems to add something new to the list of relevant factors.

Very similar lists of factors appear even in specialist studies, such as Brown's (2001) review of mentoring in work-based learning which identifies the following:

- The establishment of a mentor recruitment plan.
- Eligibility screening for mentors and students.
- Training for mentors and those to be mentored.
- Matching students with mentors.
- A monitoring process and a process for providing ongoing support and training.
- Closure steps.

(Derived from Brown, 2001)

The issue of matching mentors with the young people, and the quality of the relationship between them, occurs in several of these lists. Herrera, Sipe and

McClanahan (2000) looked at the development of such relationships and found nine factors which they describe as 'benchmarks' of such developing relationships. These were:

(1) engaging in social activities;

(2) engaging in academic activities;

(3) number of hours per month spent together;

(4) decision-making shared by mentor and mentee;

(5) prematch training;

(6) postmatch training;

(7) mentor screening (only important to relationship development in community-based programs);

(8) matching; and

(9) age of the mentee.

(Herrera, Sipe and Mclanahan, 2000)

Kerka (1998) noted that 'There is disagreement over the advantages and disadvantages of matching characteristics in mentoring relationships' and Wallace, Abel and Ropers-Huilman (2000) found little support 'to substantiate matching mentors and mentees by race or gender' in their study of undergraduate mentoring. More will be said about matching after the discussion of UK literature below.

Evidence from the UK

Once again there is less evidence from the UK about the factors important in ensuring that mentoring works. However, the *Mentoring Action Project* (MAP), which worked with 'disaffected' young people in 20 careers service companies, highlighted a number of conditions for career guidance mentoring to work. These included:

- client centredness, depth of empathy and understanding, and knowledge of their clients on the part of the mentors
- a holistic approach to the guidance (which 'entails giving full consideration to those social and personal issues which are impeding progression')
- advocacy by the mentor on behalf of the mentee
- 'graded steps' (progressing through manageable increments and attainable objectives)
- 'access to a range of local opportunities to facilitate and support young people's development and progression'
- partnership (with other local agencies)
- integration of mentoring provision with other services
- financial assistance for the young people.

(Derived from Ford, 1998)

While Miller (1998), who looked at *Business and Community Mentoring in Schools*, found that:

- mentoring needs to be part of a whole school approach to raising attainment
- students for mentoring should be volunteers rather than conscripts
- the mentor co-ordinator role is vital. The co-ordinator needs to ensure good communication strategies between mentors and students, establish a system for tracking students and feed back information on student progress to mentors, staff and students themselves
- mentoring schemes require the commitment of senior management and the support of the whole staff
- training for mentors should include information on the curriculum, deadlines for coursework etc, strategy for meetings, setting and reviewing targets, and approaches to target-setting.

(Derived from Miller, 1998)

Both of these lists contain factors which are institutional and systemic and remind us that mentoring does not exist in isolation. The integration of mentoring into an organisational setting, and alongside other services and opportunities, may be as important for its success as the features of the mentoring scheme itself. A similar message comes from the pilot year evaluation of *Mentor Points* (Golden, Lines and Sims, 2002a,b) where the main thrust of the development of quality systems related to:

- management and administration of the Mentor Point
- marketing and publicity
- recruitment
- training
- preparation and matching of mentees
- links with partners
- customer care
- monitoring and evaluation.

(Golden, Lines and Sims, 2002a,b)

Elsewhere Cameron-Jones and O'Hara (1997) have reminded us that all work-based learning, whether or not mentoring is involved, requires a mixture of support and challenge to the learner, and that the balance will vary with the context. Piper and Piper (2000) advise that 'mentoring with young people should be focused on specific goals positively regarded by young people and not on alleged generalised conditions like disaffection or disengagement'. Philip (1999) and Coldwell (1999) produce reviews of mentoring which include short lists of features of best practice which are very similar to those in the US literature (above) and which appear to be derived from that source.

Cullen and Barlow (1998) looked at mentoring in a training programme for young adults with physical disability (in this case, arthritis), and addressed the issue of whether mentors and mentees should be matched. They found:

> One paradoxical issue to emerge revolved around the degree of commonality between the mentor and mentee (i.e. the presence of arthritis). Matching mentor and mentee on the basis of physical disability should ensure understanding of difficulties encountered. In practice, this communality served to inhibit mentees' use of the mentor and therefore may have influenced ensuing benefits.
>
> (Cullen and Barlow, 1998)

What appears to have happened is that the mentees understood too well the difficulties that any request for assistance to their mentors could cause the mentors, and did not wish to burden them. In this case 'shared understanding' seems to have had the opposite effect to that intended.

Bennetts (1999) found mixed results on the issue of matching mentors and mentees:

> Those schemes whose mentors had shared similar experiences and were now employed, provided mentees with a credible role model and a sense of hope for the future. However, mentors with differing life experiences were also viewed positively, as they were able to provide insider information into areas of work which previously might not have been considered.
>
> (Bennetts, 1999)

Considering this together with the US literature reported earlier, it would appear that the question of whether mentors should be matched with their mentees is more complicated than it might at first seem, and that there is no simple answer to it in the current research literature.

Conclusions

- The US literature has identified a number of key features which help to make mentoring schemes successful. These include: monitoring of program implementation; screening of prospective mentors; matching of mentors and youth on relevant criteria; both pre-match and on-going training; supervision; support for mentors; structured activities for mentors and youth; parental support and involvement; frequency of contact and length of relationship.
- The UK literature reminds us that mentoring needs to be properly integrated into its organisational context and establish appropriate links with other services and opportunities.
- There are mixed views on whether mentors should be matched with their mentees and, if so, on what basis the matching should be made.

5. What doesn't work?

Just as there are features of mentoring schemes which can enhance their chances of success, there are other factors which can potentially diminish them. The most obvious, of course, is simply the absence of the features of 'best practice' identified in the previous section. This can particularly affect those young people who are already 'at-risk'. Dubois *et al* (2002) noted in their review that there is 'a noteworthy potential for poorly implemented programs to actually have an adverse effect on such youth'. Not surprisingly, however, 'what doesn't work' has not received the same amount of attention in the research literature as what does. Nevertheless there are comments upon it scattered throughout the literature.

Once again the evidence from the USA will be reviewed first, followed by that from the UK.

Evidence from the USA

One attempt to grapple with potential pitfalls in the mentoring process has been made by Eby *et al* (2000) who examined 'The protégé's perspective regarding negative mentoring experiences' in order to construct a typology of such experiences. This study was based on a content analysis of interviews with 156 'protégés' and produced five main themes into which these negative experiences were clustered. These were:

- mismatch within dyad
- distancing behaviour
- manipulative behaviour (by mentor)
- lack of mentor expertise
- general dysfunctionality.

(Eby *et al*, 2000)

The 'protégés' in this study reported negative mentoring experiences most often when their mentors had dissimilar attitudes, values and beliefs from them.

Grossman and Garry (1997) claim that the four key barriers to effective mentoring are:

- social distance (between the mentor and mentee)
- time constraints
- training (or lack of it)
- recruitment and training of suitable mentors.

(Grossman and Garry, 1997)

The common themes appear to be the lack of shared values or beliefs which leads to 'social distance' or 'mismatch', and the lack of training and/or expertise.

Sipe (1996) warns us against having too high expectations of even the best mentoring experience which is unlikely, in itself, to produce spectacular results:

> Although there are youth whose lives have been dramatically and durably altered because of one experience, they are the exception. The vast majority of youth require a succession of effective experiences – be they 'natural' or 'programmatic'. The puzzle for social policy is to find out what an effective and cost-efficient threshold succession of experiences looks like.
>
> (Sipe, 1996)

Perhaps, then, one pitfall for mentoring is that there is simply not enough of it.

Evidence from the UK

In the UK Colley has published a number of papers dealing with the problems encountered by a group of 'disaffected' youth and their mentors who were brought together by a pre-vocational training programme for 16–19 year-olds (Colley, 2000a,b; 2001a,b,c,d; Colley and Hodkinson, 2001). This was a small scale qualitative study which is notable for the series of analyses of this particular set of mentoring relationships which it produced. Colley maintains that there were 'significant gaps between the goals and assumptions of the scheme, and the desires and needs of the mentees' and that 'Many mentees and mentors felt unduly constrained by the tight focus on planning for employment'. The result was that many mentees developed resistance to the scheme, many mentors became critical of the young people they were supposed to help, and a climate of blame developed. The young people 'contested the imposition of a focus on employment within their mentoring sessions' and the scheme ended by 're-creating experiences of exclusion for some of its clients'. Colley suggests that for such a scheme to succeed 'the goals need to be more closely in tune with the needs and aspirations of the young people themselves' (Colley 2001b).

The mentors were themselves affected by this mismatch between the aims of the scheme and the mentees' perceptions of their own needs. As the mentees' resistance to the aims of the scheme became more apparent, the ways that the mentors talked about them changed:

> Initial definitions of disaffection, particularly in relation to the individual young person, seemed to fall within the mode of 'deficit', but as the interviews progressed, their discourse shifted towards a more explicit discourse of deviance.
>
> (Colley, 2001d)

In other words, they began to blame the mentees for their attitudes and behaviour and spoke more often of how 'they' differed from 'us'. Colley analyses this reaction in terms of the respective social classes of the mentors and mentees:

> ... the research findings presented here reveal the weakness of the general assumption that middle class mentors can demonstrate empathy and acceptance of working class young people.
>
> (Colley, 2001d)

Colley and Hodkinson (2001) have taken the general point about the disruptive effects of a mismatch between the values, attitudes and beliefs of the young person and the aims of the scheme within which they are being mentored and questioned how this will affect the role of the Personal Advisers who are being introduced within the *ConneXions* service:

> ... will the Personal Advisers be able to work with young people on the client's terms? Given the predominant focus on educational achievement, the gaining of employment and the reduction of social security dependence, this seems unlikely where those terms differ from the official view. For example, will Personal Advisers be permitted to help a young person drop out of a thoroughly unsatisfactory educational experience, if that is what they are determined to do? Will Advisers have the status and power to challenge institutions, such as schools, colleges, the police or the Employment Service, to fight for what their client wants? If the Personal Advisers are seen as policing rather than helping, their influence on some clients is likely to be extremely limited.
>
> (Colley and Hodkinson, 2001)

Watts (2001) has also commented on the role of Personal Advisers within the *ConneXions* service and noted the confusion which has surrounded them:

> Young people at risk were to have access not only to a Personal Adviser but also to a volunteer mentor: the relationship between the two roles was not clear. Further confusion was added by initially using the term 'Learning Mentors' – adapted from the Excellence in Cities programme ... – to describe Personal Advisers based in schools. To compound the confusion still further, initial statements indicated that 'The Personal Adviser for most 13–16 year old children will be a Learning Mentor based in their school' ... whereas later it was stated that, in Excellence in Cities areas, Connexions advisers were to 'work alongside EiC Learning mentors' ... – with no indication of how their roles were to be differentiated.
>
> (Watts, 2001)

What is clear from all of this is that a mismatch between the aims of any mentoring scheme and the values of the young people being mentored will lead to problems, as will any confusion in the role of the mentor. If the mentor comes to be seen as acting on behalf of 'authority' rather than on behalf of the young person, then the mentoring relationship is endangered, and probably destroyed.

Much then depends on the form that mentoring takes. Garvey (1999) looked at mentoring within 83 organisations which used mentoring for induction or development of their staff. These organisations covered the manufacturing, service and public sectors (including education). He concluded that 'the form mentoring takes is dependent on the dominant culture, structure and management style of the organisation' and that there is a danger that mentoring may become 'just another case of management jargon aimed at achieving its own ends with people as the means'. He distinguished between 'collectivist' and 'individualist' cultures within organisations and argued that

> Collectivist cultures ... tend to value mentoring for its developmental potential and focus on perpetuating the existing culture [i.e. it is inherently conservative]. Individualist cultures, on the other hand, may view mentoring as a form of dependency or weakness.
>
> (Garvey, 1999)

In another analysis Garvey notes that organisations which are 'task-focused' and indebted to Taylorist thinking may see mentoring simply as a means of enhancing productivity.

> In this case an organisation would be using the language of development but the behaviours of power and control. In such an environment, mentoring cannot exist for it simply becomes the instrument of a manipulating management. What such an organisation may mean by mentoring is in fact 'coaching'.
>
> (Garvey, 1999)

What such arguments seem to lead to is the conclusion that any form of mentoring which becomes focused on the needs of the organisation (or 'system') rather than the individual being mentored is in danger of becoming self-defeating and ceasing to be 'mentoring', unless one accepts that 'mentoring' as a form of indoctrination is acceptable.

Conclusions

Mentoring is in danger of being unsuccessful if any of the following conditions apply:

- social distance and mismatch between the values of mentor and mentee
- inexpert or untrained mentors
- mismatch between the aims of the mentoring scheme and the needs of the person being mentored
- conflict of roles such that it is not clear whether the mentor is to act on behalf of the person being mentored or of 'authority'.

6. Is there a case for regulation?

There is very little in the research literature that has a direct bearing on this question. In the USA Sipe and Roder found that there was extensive use of written applications, personal interviews, reference checks and criminal record checks to vet mentor volunteers. They found that 95% of all BBBSA schemes used all four methods and that 75% of all programmes use at least three of these methods. They note that more checking occurs in community-based schemes and suggest that this may be because less is required in site-based schemes (as the staff will have been previously vetted to work with young people) (Sipe and Roder, 1999).

In the UK the fact that there are potential risks has been recognised, but there is no evidence about it:

> ... mentoring can also be a risky business, particularly when it is a highly private relationship between two people. A clear need exists for further investigations of mentoring within both natural and programmed settings to examine the potential for abuse.
>
> (Philip and Hendry, 2000)

A particular concern might be the pairing of male and female mentor and mentee, but even on that issue there is little evidence. 'Within most of the literature is the explicit and implicit inference that cross-gender mentoring has at least the potential for a miscarriage of the mentoring ideals' but 'there is far from consensus regarding its effect and impact upon mentoring' (Roberts, 1999).

It must be assumed that all normal legal requirements for those working with children and young people must be met by mentors who work with those below a certain age. Whether that age should be altered for mentors working with specified groups, or whether there should be additional requirements for mentors are questions of policy on which the research literature can shed little light.

It must also be assumed that any such regulation could only apply to 'artificial' mentoring within recognised mentoring schemes. It is difficult to see how regulation could apply to naturally-occurring or informal mentoring.

Conclusions

- Research has little to say on the case for regulation, although it does recognise the potential for problems to arise in the mentoring relationship.

7. What are the views of mentees?

In this section we will look at what the research has to tell us about the views of those who are mentored. There is surprisingly little said about this in the literature.

It is clear that the experience of being mentored can have an impact. Wallace *et al* (2000) found that American undergraduates who had been mentored felt bound by the experience to persist when they might not otherwise have done so:

> The study notes that students reported they felt an obligation to continue their education as a result of the deep commitment of support personnel and the benefits of counseling, tutoring, and institutional guidance, and found that formal mentoring appeared to positively affect student participation, retention, and success in college.
>
> (Wallace *et al*, 2000)

Similarly Cullen and Barlow found that mentoring had a motivational effect on the young disabled adults in their study:

> ... this study suggests that the mentor played a crucial role in sustaining mentees' links with the programme, in maintaining mentees' motivation and providing emotional support as required.
>
> (Cullen and Barlow, 1998)

In a study of lifelong learners who had experienced mentoring relationships (mostly informal or 'naturally occurring' ones), Bennetts (2001) characterised those relationships in terms of their equality and the emotional ties they generated. There is depth of feeling in many of the respondents' comments and Bennetts concludes that 'as what occurs naturally cannot be expected to flourish under artificial constraints there is little we can do to reproduce the relationship'.

However, as Philip and Hendry (1996) pointed out, it is not clear if male and female mentees will react in similar ways for 'the process of mentoring appeared to be highly gendered: young men were less likely to identify mentoring or the need for mentoring as salient in their lives'. Throughout the literature there are references to the gendered nature of mentoring, but little discussion of its implications for mentees. One might speculate that, for some young males an 'expressive' style of mentoring could be less acceptable than an 'instrumental' style, but this does not seem to have been an issue addressed within the research literature.

Yau (1995) interviewed 15 physical education students studying for a post-graduate certificate in education and found that what they valued in a mentor was:

- a mentor able to function in a professional and pastoral capacity
- a mentor demonstrating competency in his/her subject area
- a mentor with communication skills
- mentor as facilitator
- a mentor offering positive, constructive feedback
- mentor on 'task'.

(Yau, 1995)

There is no indication of any gender differences in the responses of the students in this study.

Colley's work with 'disaffected' young people on a pre-vocational training scheme has been mentioned several times already, but it worth re-stating the extent to which those young people developed resistance strategies to a scheme with which they fundamentally disagreed. Yet, despite this, they are reported as having 'valued their relationships with their mentors' (Colley, 2000b). However, valuing the relationship did not prevent them from attempting to assert such control as they could:

> ... it became evident that young people did not only assert their own agency through a 'take it or leave it' approach to the experience of mentoring, but engaged in active struggle within their relationships to pursue their own agendas rather than the institutional agenda mentors were expected to convey.
>
> (Colley, 2001a)

It would seem then, that those who are mentored can find value in their relationship with their mentor, and that this can provide them with sufficient motivation to continue in the face of difficulties. They also know what they like in a 'good' mentor. None of this, however, will prevent their active resistance to a mentoring scheme which attempts to impose alien values upon them.

Conclusions

- There is little in the literature which explores the views of mentees in any depth.
- Some research demonstrates how much mentees value their relationship with their mentor.
- It is clear that mentees will react to mentoring schemes according to whether they are congruent with their own values.

8. What are the views of mentors?

In this section we will look at what the research has to tell us about the views of the mentors. As a background to this, it is worth noting that the research literature confirms that in both the USA and the UK the majority of mentors are female (Philip, 2000; Golden *et al*, 2002) and that there tends to be a lack of ethnic minority mentors (Grossman and Garry, 1997; Golden *et al*, 2002). There is less evidence about the social class of mentors but both Philip (2000a) and Colley (2001d) suggest that they tend to be predominantly middle class. In the US Herrera *et al* (2000) found that mentors in school-based programmes covered a wide span of ages, but that those in community-based programmes were almost all aged between 22 and 49 years old. There is no corresponding data on the ages of mentors from the UK.

There has already been considerable discussion of Colley's work with 'disaffected' young people in previous sections, but it should be added here that the problems which emerged in that mentoring scheme affected the mentors as much as the mentees. Both felt 'unduly constrained by the tight focus on planning for employment' (Colley, 2000b). The conflict between the young people's agenda and the official aims of the scheme eventually led to mentor disillusionment which 'locates the cause of exclusion in the moral character of young people themselves, and generates a tendency to blame the mentee if they do not respond quickly enough to the mentor's efforts' (Colley, 2000b). The pressure to enforce the 'official' agenda had further consequences for the mentors who:

> ... seemed to have lost confidence the longer they had been mentoring. A number also described a strong sense of surveillance and even fear about their experiences, as they located themselves in relation to the ... scheme and its staff.
>
> (Colley, 2001a)

Colley describes in detail the painful feelings which were generated in the (all female) mentors as they engaged in the 'emotional labour' of working with their mentees. This could have considerable costs for the mentors:

> [there were] ... three ways in which the costs of emotional labour tended to manifest themselves in individuals. If the worker continued to try to put her 'heart and soul' into the job, she risked stress and 'burn-out'. If she tried to protect herself by distancing her 'real' self from her work identity, and trying to 'act the part', she risked detachment from her own emotions and low self-esteem for her insincerity. If she tried to separate her 'real' and 'work' selves without succumbing to self-blame, she risked cynicism and guilt.
>
> (Colley, 2001b)

In this way a scheme which tried to impose its own agenda on to the young people being mentored had negative consequences not only for the young people (many of whom were branded as 'failures' because of their subversion of the 'official line'), but also for the mentors who felt trapped in a false situation.

Colley's work may stand as a warning of what can happen when things go wrong, and as such it is instructive (although her analysis does have a definite ideological slant of its own), but there are plenty of counter-examples in the literature

of mentors having good experiences. Griffin (1995) describes how mentors in a university programme identified four stages in a successful mentoring experience:

- foundation (getting acquainted, establishing ground rules and expectations)
- building (establishing trust)
- organisation (establishing ways of working together)
- reflection (reflecting on the experience).

(Griffin, 1995)

Roberts (1999) found that mentors felt that they were expected to demonstrate high levels of both 'instrumentality' and 'expressiveness' and to show flexibility and versatility. He does not report on whether they successfully did so, but they certainly felt that this was what was expected of them.

Generally, studies of mentors show that they tend to 'perceive the experience of being identified as a mentor and the process of mentoring in highly positive terms' (Philip and Hendry, 2000). Philip and Hendry (2000) describe the benefits for adult mentors who were involved in informal mentoring relationships in terms of the 'cultural capital' it generated:

> Mentoring was interpreted as a form of cultural capital *for mentors* in four respects:
>
> (a) by enabling them to make sense of their own past experiences ...;
>
> (b) as an opportunity to gain insights into the realities of other people's lives and to learn from these for themselves;
>
> (c) as having the potential to develop alternative kinds of relationship which were reciprocal and across generations; and
>
> (d) as building up a set of psycho-social skills as 'exceptional adults' able to offer support, challenge and a form of friendship.
>
> (Philip and Hendry, 2000)

Elsewhere Ellis (2000) has confirmed the benefits for adults involved in school-based mentoring: 'older people ... seem to gain significant benefits and enhanced quality of life through educational contact with the young'.

Even in the most 'artificial' mentoring schemes benefits are apparent for the mentors. Miller (1998) reports on *Business and Community Mentoring in Schools* that:

> The most highly rated personal benefits for mentors were: doing something worthwhile for young people; understanding the needs and problems of young people today; gaining insights into how young people think; and improving their (the mentor's) interpersonal skills.
>
> (Miller, 1998)

The benefits to mentors can be classified in terms of their self-esteem, their social

insight, and their social and interpersonal skills.

It therefore seems clear that, when a mentoring scheme works, there are benefits for both parties in the mentoring relationship. Equally, when it does not work, both may suffer.

Conclusions

- Mentors tend to be female, white, and (probably) middle class.
- Benefits to mentors can be classified in terms of self-esteem, social insight, and social and interpersonal skills.
- When mentoring schemes go wrong both mentors and mentees can suffer.

9. What are the views of commissioning bodies and/or employers?

Not surprisingly, organisations which are in the business of promoting mentoring schemes tend to make a number of claims about the benefits arising from mentoring. A typical example would be this from the European Mentoring Centre:

> Among the most common benefits identified by employers from mentoring are:
>
> improved recruitment and retention of employees
>
> more rapid integration of new employees (particularly at management level)
>
> better management of stress
>
> improved performance
>
> better planning and achievement of learning
>
> improved communication between layers and across the organisation.
>
> Within community schemes, mentoring has brought about increased self-confidence in disadvantaged young people and job seekers; remarkably low levels of recidivism among young offenders; and greater community awareness within participating employers.
>
> (<http://www.mentoringcentre.org>)

Insofar as such claims are supported by the research literature (and insofar as they are relevant to the subject of this review), they have already been discussed in earlier sections of this review.

It is also not surprising that mentor co-ordinators tend to see mentoring in a favourable light. Bennetts (1999) reported that:

> Co-ordinators were unanimous concerning the positive benefits of mentoring for the young mentees. Such benefits ranged from the psychosocial e.g. raised self-esteem; improved confidence, better communication skills; having a non-authoritarian figure to talk to; improved motivation: to those which were more job focused e.g. learning how to search for jobs, cv planning; job applications; NVQ achievement; money management.
>
> (Bennetts, 1999)

However, these reported perceptions were not supported by any further evidence.

As will have been apparent from all that has gone before in this review, the research which has taken place to date in the UK has tended to be the work of interested individuals. However, with the growth of interest in mentoring, it is worth noting that commissioners of research are beginning to turn their attention to this as an area for study. In particular, it should be noted that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is currently funding four research projects which look at

mentoring in various contexts. As these have not yet reported, no more will be said here, but details can be found in Appendix A.

In an earlier section we have already discussed Garvey's (1999) survey of 83 organisations where mentoring was used for staff development and induction. It is worth repeating his conclusion that 'the form mentoring takes is dependent on the dominant culture, structure and management style of the organisation' and that there is a danger that mentoring may become 'just another case of management jargon aimed at achieving its own ends with people as the means' (Garvey, 1999: see section 'What doesn't work' for further discussion).

Elsewhere Miller (1998) reported the views of managers of businesses where employees were acting as mentors to young people. They were favourably disposed to this activity and saw benefits in it for their organisations, the wider community, and the members of staff who were acting as mentors:

> The most highly rated benefits to the mentors' organisations were: contributing to the local economy; developing the mentoring skills of staff; gaining good PR; and developing the interpersonal skills of staff.
>
> (Miller (1998)

It is not clear to what extent business involvement in outside mentoring schemes (for mentees not directly employed by them) is driven by public spirit, desire for good public relations, or recognition of direct benefits to the business. Findings such as Miller's do, however, suggest that mixture of all these motives may be present. No doubt the balance between them is likely to vary between organisations.

Conclusions

- Those directly involved in promoting mentoring tend to make large claims for it. Insofar as these are supported by research, they are discussed earlier.
- There are signs that research funders are beginning to recognise the need for research into mentoring in the UK.
- There is some evidence that businesses are favourably disposed towards mentoring (both for their own employees and for others), but this varies with the culture of the organisation.

10. Conclusions

One of the main conclusions from this review must be that any discussion of mentoring is likely to encounter a number of fundamental problems at the outset. Mentoring remains an ill-defined concept. There are many things which are known as 'mentoring' and they differ greatly amongst themselves to the extent that it is difficult to see what the essential core of 'mentoring' could be. The assumptions underlying mentoring – particularly in some recent UK policy developments – are also deeply contested by recent commentators.

There are also a number of aspects of mentoring which remain under-researched, particularly in a UK context, and some of the questions which this review set out to answer can only be approached tentatively at this stage. This is particularly so for the questions on regulation, and the views of mentors, mentees, and employers.

Having said that, it has been possible to arrive at some conclusions regarding the questions we set out to answer, and these have been set out at the end of each section, and in the executive summary at the beginning of the review. There is evidence of positive outcomes from mentoring (though the effects are not large); and there are definite features associated with successful – and unsuccessful – mentoring schemes. Evidence for the other research questions tends to be more limited and the answers given must be more tentative.

We have seen that the US literature has been particularly fruitful for the large-scale quantitative analyses which have been a feature of mentoring evaluations there. In contrast, the strengths of the UK literature have been in conceptual analysis and in-depth qualitative analysis of some of the questions regarding mentoring. Perhaps this has at least partly been because there have until recently been few large-scale mentoring schemes in the UK to evaluate quantitatively. This, however, remains the largest gap in the UK research literature on mentoring.

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Appendix A: Other relevant work

The Underaspirers Experiment

Professor Carol Fitzgibbon of Durham University runs YELLIS (The Year Eleven Information System) which is a battery of attitudinal measures and academic tests used by many English schools with Year 11 pupils. The feedback to schools includes a list of pupils who appear to be 'underaspiring', ie 'those pupils who, through a combination of attitudinal answers and actual performance in the YELLIS Test, have been identified as being significantly less interested in remaining in education after Year 11 than other pupils of similar ability' (YELLIS web site). Such 'underaspirers' are habitually offered some form of counselling and advice sessions.

The 'Underaspirers Experiment' sought to investigate the consequences of labelling pupils as 'underaspirers'. One hundred and twenty 'underaspiring' pupils were identified in fifteen schools, but only half of them were identified to the schools. This half were randomly chosen. Once they had completed their GCSEs and had their results, the results of the two groups (identified and unidentified to the schools) were compared. To quote the YELLIS web site:

> The main finding of the experiment was that pupils who were named on the underaspirers lists achieved lower residuals (value added scores) than those who were equally underaspiring but were not named to the schools. The average GCSE grades were typically lower by 0.6 of a grade for pupils named as underaspirers.

The schools also supplied further information about the levels of counselling which all pupils (identified and unidentified) had had. When this was analysed it was found that 'as counselling levels increased, residuals (value added scores) decreased for the subsequent GCSE examinations'.

One of the implications of this finding is that targeted intervention can be counter-productive. There is no proof about the mechanism behind this effect, but one explanation is that the labelling of pupils as likely to achieve less than expected became a self-fulfilling prophecy. 'Underaspirers' may have accepted this judgement upon them. By being singled out for special counselling they were, in effect, being told that they were likely to fail (or at least to do less well than they should).

This has implications for any targeted intervention (such as mentoring) which is aimed at a group somehow identified as likely to underachieve. If the intervention is seen by the recipient as being the result of some perceived deficit within themselves, they may come to accept that judgement, lose motivation, and turn the prediction into reality.

This was only one experiment with 120 pupils. As such it cannot be regarded as conclusive. However, it was a randomised controlled trial, which is powerful experimental method of investigating such questions. At the time of writing it had not been repeated, though there are plans to do so.

All quotations above are from the YELLIS web site, from where further details can be obtained.

Go to: <http://cem.dur.ac.uk/yellis/reports/underaspirer.asp>

Current research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The following research projects were known to be underway at the time of writing. They have not yet reported and are not included in the body of this review.

In the *Children, Young People and Families* Research Programme:

Researcher: Kate Philip, University of Aberdeen

Title: *Making a Difference? A qualitative study of mentoring interventions with vulnerable young people*

Completion due: September 2003.

Researcher: Mike Stein, York University

Title: *Mentoring for care leavers: evaluating longer-term outcomes (at 12–18 months) and exploring key issues*

Completion due: April 2004

Researcher: Tim Newburn

Title: *Mentoring Plus: an evaluation*

Completion due: September 2003.

In the *Social Care and Disability* Research Programme:

Researcher: Maureen Greene

Title: *Young disabled people's peer mentoring group*

Completion due: September 2002

Further details of the above projects can be found at <http://www.jrf.org.uk>

Appendix B: Search strategies

The principal databases used to search for relevant literature for this review were the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the British Education Index (BEI) and the Educational Research in Scotland Database (ERSDAT). ERSDAT was simply examined for all entries with the keyword 'mentor'. The search strategies for ERIC and BEI are given below. As mentoring occurs in a wide variety of settings, with many different groups, and for a range of purposes, it was necessary to exclude a large amount of the mentoring literature which was not relevant to the subject of this review.

ERIC Search Strategy:

1. All entries with the keyword MENTORS were included.
2. All entries from before 1995 were excluded.
3. All entries with any of the following keywords were excluded:

ADMINISTRATOR ACTIVITIES
ADMINISTRATOR ATTITUDES
ADMINISTRATOR BEHAVIOR
ADMINISTRATOR EDUCATION
ADMINISTRATOR EFFECTIVENESS
ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITY
ADMINISTRATOR ROLE
ADMINISTRATORS
COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION
TEACHER ADMINISTRATOR RELATIONSHIP
TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM
TEACHER EDUCATION
TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
TEACHER EDUCATION//INSERVICE
TEACHER EDUCATION//PRESERVICE
TEACHER EDUCATORS
TEACHER IMPROVEMENT
TEACHER INTERNS
TEACHERS//BEGINNING
BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION
BEGINNING TEACHERS
GRADUATE STUDENTS
GRADUATE STUDY
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE
WORK EXPERIENCE
COUNSELOR TRAINING
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

PRINCIPALS
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE
NURSING EDUCATION
SCIENCE EDUCATION
SCIENCE INSTRUCTION
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
CAREER EDUCATION
GUIDES--CLASSROOM--LEARNER
GUIDES--CLASSROOM--TEACHER
GUIDES--GENERAL
GUIDES--NON-CLASSROOM
LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY MATERIALS
OPINION PAPERS
REPORTS--DESCRIPTIVE
REPORTS--GENERAL
TEST/QUESTIONNAIRES

This left a total of 331 references. The titles and abstracts of these were read and those which were judged relevant to this review were obtained.

BEI Search Strategy:

1. All entries with the keyword MENTORS were included
2. All entries from before 1995 were excluded.
3. All entries with any of the following keywords were excluded:

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION
ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT
AESTHETIC VALUES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
NURSE EDUCATION
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION
BEGINNING TEACHERS
TEACHER EDUCATION
POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION
POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION COURSES
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
TEACHER EDUCATOR EDUCATION
TEACHER EDUCATORS
MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION
MEDICAL EDUCATION
SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION
SOCIAL WORK
SOCIAL WORK STUDIES

SOCIAL WORKERS
PRIMARY SCHOOLS
GRADUATE STUDENTS
GRADUATE STUDY
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
STUDENT TEACHERS
SCHOOL BASED INSERVICE EDUCATION
SCHOOL BASED TEACHER EDUCATION
HEAD TEACHERS
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

This left a total of 74 references. The titles and abstracts of these were read and those which were judged relevant to this review were obtained.

In addition a number of people who were connected with mentoring schemes were contacted and asked to supply information on any documents which they considered relevant to the review, and a number of web sites of relevant organisations were consulted (details in bibliography). Other documents were identified through the lists of references given in some of the literature.

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